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AUTHOR Fox, Karen; Humm, William, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

This booklet offers a census of course offerings and enrollments in social studies in junior and senior high schools in Illinois. It is part of a series of reports surveying statewide basic curriculum data. Data were collected in 1977 from 459 public junior high schools and 704 public high schools. The document is intended for use by school administrators, school board members, teachers, parents, legislators, and others who have a role in making decisions about public education in Illinois. Specifically, the data can help educational policy makers by providing background data on issues including modifying programs in light of declining enrollments, reallocating resources, and assessing the impact of federal regulations and state laws mandating equal access to all school programs for boys and girls. In addition to information on course offerings, information is presented on school size and community type (central city, suburb, independent city, or rural). Highlights of the report are that every Illinois secondary school offers social studies courses; United States history is required of all students for graduation from eighth grade and high school; there is no direct relationship between the frequency with which a course is offered at the high school level and the level of enrollment; over 50% of the high school social studies courses are electives; there are no sex differences in enrollment in social studies courses; enrollment declines may induce schools to reduce the number of social studies courses; and competency testing in the social studies is becoming increasingly broadened. (Author/DB)

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Illinois Secondary School Course Offerings

Illinois State Board of Education

Research and Statistics

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Special Report on Social Studies

FOREWORD

In 1832 as he announced his candidacy for the Illinois legislature, Abraham Lincoln said:

> That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own, and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance.

To insure that teachers would be prepared to teach American History, it was made a part of the Illinois teacher certification examination in 1845.

Over a century later, the social studies -- now embracing the social sciences as well as history -- remain an important component of the secondary school curriculum. Their task has been considerably broadened to include preparation in consumer skills, analysis of social issues, and civic participation skills, as well as an appreciation of American institutions.

The findings on social studies course offerings and enrollments are drawn from the 1977 Illinois Census of Secondary School Course Offerings. This Special Report was written by Professor Karen Fox of Northwestern University and edited by Dr. William Humm of the Research and Statistics Section, Illinois State Board of Education. The report provides information of interest to those who have a role in making decisions about future directions for public education in Illinois. I hope it will be widely read.

Observations and conclusions in this report are those of the writer and do not necessarily represent policies or views of the Illinois State Board of Education or the State Superintendent of Education.

Joseph M. Cronin
State Superintendent of Education

HIGHLIGHTS SUMMARY

* Virtually every Illinois secondary school offers social studies courses, and U.S. History is required of all students for graduation from eighth grade and high school.

* Junior high schools typically offer 2 social studies courses. High schools offer a median of 7 courses, with a range of up to 32. The large number of social studies courses offered in some schools raises questions about the value of course proliferation.

* There is no direct relationship between the frequency with which a course is offered at the high school level and the level of enrollment. U.S. History, a required course, is the one exception.

* Over half of the high school courses are electives; but only sixty percent of students taking social studies are enrolled in elective courses.

* There are no sex differences in enrollment in social studies courses.

* Enrollment declines may induce schools to reduce the number of social studies courses. This reduction could take the form of a return to traditional offerings and/or a reconceptualization of the social studies curriculum.

* Social studies (and other) teachers will have fewer sources of professional stimulation as enrollments drop and faculty turnover decreases. Schools need to consider ways to encourage faculty development.

* Minimum competency testing in the social studies has existed in Illinois for decades. As competency testing is broadened, the contribution of social studies instruction needs to be considered to minimize risks of curriculum deflection and lowering of curriculum goals.

* The next Illinois Census of Course Offerings should collect data on the relationship between course titles and content, and on criteria for course selection and for decisions about course reductions and modifications. This information related to the quality of the educational experience will help in interpreting the quantitative findings.

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STUDYING SOCIAL STUDIES

The social studies have long been part of the school curriculum, whether under the label of history, the various social science disciplines, or some combination of them. Courses in history, delimited by country and by era, stand with courses in political science, economics, geography, political geography, economic geography, and a mass of others under the umbrella of "the social studies." This variety is explained by the development of the social science disciplines in the United States. History was a traditional part of the secondary school curriculum. Thus, historians wrote the widely used school history texts and dominated the groups which shaped the public school social studies curriculum into the twentieth century. Nineteenth century social scientists were found in the history departments of colleges and universities and typically belonged to the American Historical Association. The broadening of the school curriculum to include the social sciences came in the early twentieth century when social scientists broke away and formed their own departments and discipline-based associations.

Their competition for recognition and prestige took place, in part, over space in the school curriculum, with social scientists arguing the value of their discipline with historians. The social studies curriculum has continued to be influenced by educators, politicians, parents, and the many interest groups which view the schools as the logical vehicle for imparting useful information and appropriate attitudes and values. The social studies curriculum has been the most permeable part of the school program for two reasons. First, the social studies deal with value issues; thus any issue with a value component seems, at least initially, a candidate for inclusion there. Second, being the most broadly defined (or, some would claim, undefined) subject area makes it more vulnerable to pressures from without. Thus, social studies teachers have been held responsible for inculcating democratic attitudes and values in time of war, for encouraging conservation and other civic virtues in times of scarcity, for promoting the free enterprise system, for providing knowledge of careers, and for encouraging the exploration of personal and social values -- among other tasks, such as warning students about the hazards of drugs and alcohol and the perils of marriage and family life. Social studies educators have thus had a difficult time stating not only what the social studies are, but what they are not. Competing definitions of the appropriate content and purpose of the field abound -- most recently in a book entitled Defining the Social Studies (Barr, Barth, and Shermis, 1977). In the absence of clarity about the boundaries of the field, the social studies curriculum is likely to remain relatively vulnerable.

This background is important to understand the diversity of social studies offerings and the variations in terminology within the field itself, and specifically to understand the results of the 1976-77 Illinois Census of Secondary School Course Offerings and Enrollments. Illinois public secondary schools generally refer to the area including history and the social sciences as "social studies" for this combination of courses plus other courses which might with equal justification be assigned to the humanities area (e.g., comparative religion), to science (e.g., conservation and environment problems), or to business (e.g., consumer education). The

course titles reported by Illinois secondary school administrators indicate that the Illinois schools follow this broad definition of the social studies, and the term "social studies" is used throughout this Special Report.

The Census was carried out to gather data on course offerings and enrollments in Illinois secondary schools for the use of school administrators, school board members, teachers, parents, legislators, and others who have a role in making decisions about public education in Illinois. The data should be of use in addressing the following educational issues:

1. Data for planning at the state level has heretofore been limited to information about school finance, personnel, facilities, and school enrollments for special funded programs. This Census is the first systematic collection and analysis of courses offered and enrollments, along with levels of participation in cocurricular activities.

2. As the first such census, the data provide an important baseline against which to assess the impact of federal regulations and state laws mandating equal access to all school programs for boys and girls. Thus enrollment and participation data were gathered for boys and girls separately.

3. Declining school enrollments over the next decade will require that state and local educational planners consider the program modifications which will best serve the educational needs of secondary school students. Clearly, there will be fewer teachers employed, with possible implications for course offerings and staffing.

4. The decline in enrollments will almost inevitably mean reductions in state aid to schools. School districts are already reacting to limitations in state funding by reallocation of resources and program changes. The data from the Census may help planners to focus on the dimensions of the status quo as a basis for future decisions about programs.

This Special Report on social studies offerings and enrollments first describes the demographic characteristics of the schools in the Census by school type (junior high and high schools), by school size, and by community type (urban, suburban, rural). The findings on course offerings and enrollments are presented next, including the variety of courses offered, course length, numbers of courses offered, typical course offerings and programs, elective courses, and sex differences in course enrollments. In this section we note also inclusion of social studies within interdisciplinary studies programs and special education programs. Conclusions are drawn from these findings and their implications are discussed in light of declines in enrollment, in number of teachers, and in state funding for schools, and in the context of minimum competency testing and pressure to go "back to the basics."

THE SCHOOLS IN THE CENSUS: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Census data were collected from 459 public junior high schools and 704 public high schools. The participating schools represent 97.0 percent of the junior high schools and 95.4 percent of the high schools in the defined population of the Census.

Schools were classified by grade level composition, by school size, and by community type. Schools classified as junior high schools were typically two-year, grade 7-8 schools (88 percent). Another 10 percent were three-year, grade 7-9 schools. High schools included four-year, grade 9-12 schools (75 percent); three-year, grade 10-12 schools (5 percent); and junior-senior high schools including grades 7-12 (16 percent).

There is a direct relationship between school size and community type, with larger schools located in central cities, smaller schools in rural areas. This relationship is particularly strong for high schools, as indicated in Table 1. Most of the rural high schools (97 percent) had under 1000 students, even when six-year (7-12) schools were included. On the other hand, 66 percent of the urban schools had enrollments over 1000. Table 2 shows the range and quartile data for high schools in the Census.

TABLE 1. ILLINOIS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS BY SIZE AND COMMUNITY TYPE, 1976-77

	Community Type					
Size	Central City	Suburb	Independent City	Rural	All	%
<200	3	2	1	112	118	16.8
200-499	6	8	36	181	231	32.8
500-999	7	17	40	49	113	16.1
1000-1699	25	48	19	6	98	13.9
1700-2599	36	52	5	3	96	13.6
2600 or >	18	30	0	0	48	6.8
ALL	95	157	101	351	704	
%	13.5	22.3	14.3	49.9		
	83%	94%	94%	97%		

TABLE 2. ENROLLMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS, 1976-77

Mean	Smallest	Largest	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
951.5	24	4869	264	504	1511

Table 3 presents data by school size and community type for junior high schools. Junior high schools generally enrolled over 500 students (90 percent) in central cities, between 200 and 1000 in suburbs (93 percent) and

independent cities (80 percent), and under 500 (95 percent) in rural areas. Table 4 gives the range and quartile data for junior high schools in the Census.

TABLE 3. ILLINOIS PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS BY SIZE AND COMMUNITY TYPE, 1976-77

	Community Type											
Size		Central City		Suburb		Independent City			Rural		All	%
200		0		9		15			59		83	18.1
200-499		3		105		46			40		194	42.3
500-999	90%	22	93%	117	80%	23	95%		5		167	36.4
1000 or		4		9		2			0		15	3.3
ALL		29		240		86			104		459	100.0
%		6.3		52.3		18.7			22.7			

TABLE 4. ENROLLMENT SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS INCLUDED IN THE CENSUS OF COURSE OFFERINGS, 1976-77

Mean	Smallest	Largest	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
451.5	37	1321	237	416	632

These demographic data are important for two reasons. First, they substantiate the scope of the data-gathering effort and justify use of the term "Census," since virtually all designated schools in fact submitted the requested data to the State Board of Education. Thus the findings based on the data have enhanced value for decisionmakers. Second, they provide a foundation for investigating the relationship between course offerings and course requirements on the one hand with course enrollments on the other. For while data on school expenditures, facilities, personnel, and overall enrollments have been routinely gathered, data on how these inputs have been combined to provide the visible, operating school program as experienced by students have been lacking.

There are, however, a number of important questions which cannot be addressed with this data. First, we cannot move from the quantitative data on numbers of courses offered and numbers of students enrolled to an understanding of the qualitative dimensions of schooling. Educators, parents, and the public are concerned about the quality of instruction and value of courses offered, to assure that student selections from the pool of available courses will provide a reasonable standard of instruction. For example, the existence of six American history courses within a specific school may be an indicator of curricular richness and of a highly specialized teaching staff, or an indicator of narrowness and fragmentation. One would, at a minimum, need to compare the program of the specific school with that of other "similar schools."

Second, we cannot determine from the data specifically what "mix" of courses students are getting. We can, however, indicate those courses which are taken by large concentrations of students. Since these courses are most frequently those required by statute or by the district for high school graduation, these enrollments can rarely be interpreted as consumer "votes" in a free market. Therefore, we cannot directly extrapolate to future enrollment levels, should graduation requirements be altered or should the course offerings be trimmed in response to the expected 25 percent decline in public secondary school enrollments between 1979 and 1991. Together with financial stringencies imposed by shifts in the economy, these declines have implications for staffing levels, class size, and availability of instructional resources which are likely to have direct impact on course offerings and enrollments. These factors are discussed later in this report.

Numbers of social studies courses offered

Taken together, Illinois' high schools offer as many different social studies courses as Campbell's soup varieties on the supermarket shelf. Social studies courses were reported under 235 titles for high schools and under 72 titles for junior high schools (condensed to 51 and 43 title categories respectively for tabular presentation). Of the total of 2,061 course titles compiled for the Census (many of which were coded from titles written in by responding school administrators), 12 percent of the high school course titles were in the social studies area, the third largest percentage after English (16 percent) and industrial arts/occupations (12 percent). For junior high schools, 14 percent of the course titles were in the social studies area, exceeded only by English (17 percent). One explanation for the large number of social studies titles is the prevalence of courses which last for a semester or less. Table 5 gives figures for course length of social science offerings by school level. High school social studies courses were much more likely than junior high courses to be less than a full year in length.

TABLE 5. PERCENTAGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES COURSES OF VARIOUS LENGTHS BY SCHOOL LEVEL FOR ILLINOIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1976-77

School Level	% Full Year	% Half Year	% Quarter or Trimester	% Less Than a Quarter
Junior High Schools	80.5	8.0	6.?	2.0
High Schools	50.6	41.8	7.2	1.7

Tables 6 and 7 present the condensed lists of social studies course titles for junior high schools and for high schools, along with enrollment data which will be considered later in this report. A reading of these tables indicates the breadth and the specialization of content subsumed under the social studies area. Unanswered is the meaning of this plethora of course titles in terms of course content, the nature of the classroom instruction, and the amount of time devoted to specific topics. Do varying course titles reflect true differences in course content? Are titles selected to appeal to students who must make the "purchase" decision with little direct information about courses and instructors? To what extent are variations in course titles subject to trends which will affect our ability to "track" the popularity of, say, consumer education several years from now and distinguish it from consumer economics?

TABLE 6

CENSUS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS, 1976-77

CODE NO.	COURSE TITLE	HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING COURSE		ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOLS OFFERING COURSE		COURSE ENROLLMENT		
		TOTAL NUMBER	% OF STATE TOTAL	TOTAL NUMBER	% OF STATE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL NUMBER	% OF STATE ENROLLMENT	% OF SCHS ENROLL.
19 000000	SOCIAL SCIENCES	702	99.71	669,465	99.94	545,367	81.41	81.46
19 010000	ANTHROPOLOGY/ARCHAEOLOGY	58	8.23	107,022	15.98	2,868	0.43	2.68
19 010200	WORLD CULTURES/MAN & HIS WORLD	42	5.96	70,107	10.47	4,641	0.69	6.62
19 020101	AREA STUDIES, AFRICA/ASIA/EURO	34	4.82	69,040	10.31	1,786	0.27	2.59
19 020106	AREA STUDIES/HIST, LAT AM/AMER	36	5.11	61,684	9.21	2,379	0.36	3.86
19 030918	HUMANITIES	25	3.55	61,835	9.23	946	0.14	1.53
19 040100	ENVIRONMENTAL PROB/CONSERVAT	32	4.54	43,215	6.45	1,364	0.20	3.16
19 050000	CONSUMER EDUCATION	173	24.57	137,224	20.49	19,357	2.89	14.11
19 060000	ECONOMICS/ECONOMIC PROBLEMS	220	31.25	303,139	45.25	14,256	2.13	4.70
19 060300	CONSUMER ECONOMICS	69	9.80	54,136	8.08	8,013	1.20	14.80
19 070001	GEOGRAPHY, GRADE 7-8	39	5.53	10,871	1.62	1,973	0.29	18.15
19 070002	GEOGRAPHY, OTHER GENERAL	7	0.99	11,766	1.76	199	0.03	1.69
19 070200	HUMAN/CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY/HSGP	31	4.40	46,885	7.00	2,727	0.41	5.82
19 070203	ECONOMIC/POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY	30	4.26	27,654	4.13	1,478	0.22	5.34
19 070300	PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY	41	5.82	43,784	6.54	2,938	0.44	6.71
19 070411	GEOG, WORLD/REGION/U.S./URBAN/	308	43.75	378,448	56.50	25,054	3.74	6.62
19 080101	AMER HIST & WORLD BACKGROUND	262	37.21	321,082	47.93	54,546	8.14	16.99
19 080302	EUROPEAN HISTORY, MODERN/OTHER	76	10.79	120,084	17.93	3,795	0.57	3.16
19 080401	STATE HISTORY, GRADE 7-8	7	0.99	1,826	0.27	417	0.06	22.84
19 080402	STATE HISTORY, GRADE 9-12	42	5.96	36,694	5.48	2,246	0.34	6.12
19 080501	U.S. HISTORY, GRADE 7-8	107	15.19	33,019	4.93	7,556	1.13	22.88
19 080502	U.S. HISTORY, GRADE 9-12	536	76.13	540,554	80.70	125,584	18.75	23.23
19 080505	BLACK HISTORY	83	11.78	163,258	24.37	8,912	1.33	5.46
19 080600	WESTERN CIVILIZATION/HISTORY	58	8.23	82,747	12.35	4,288	0.64	5.18
19 080700	NON-WESTERN HISTORY	33	4.68	62,072	9.27	1,223	0.18	1.97
19 080802	ANCIENT-MEDIEVAL HISTORY	59	8.38	70,151	10.47	4,067	0.61	5.80
19 080901	WORLD HISTORY, GRADE 7-8	21	2.98	5,281	0.79	1,185	0.18	22.44
19 080902	WORLD HISTORY, GRADE 9-12	389	55.25	331,667	49.51	25,508	3.81	7.69
19 080914	WORLD HISTORY, GENERAL/OTHER	115	16.33	201,517	30.08	36,289	5.42	18.01
19 089900	URBAN HIS ORY/STUDIES	9	1.27	15,366	2.29	600	0.09	3.90
19 100000	PHILOSOPHY	22	3.12	43,035	6.42	652	0.10	1.52
19 110000	POLITICAL SCIENCE/THEORIES	60	8.52	110,675	16.52	4,123	0.62	3.73
19 110100	AMERICAN GOVERNMENT	330	46.87	317,391	47.38	39,061	5.83	12.31
19 110101	U.S. CONSTITUTION	29	4.11	14,342	2.14	2,433	0.36	16.96
19 110103	PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY	117	16.61	109,182	16.30	6,251	0.93	5.73
19 110105	COMMUNITY CIVICS/CITIZENSHIP	92	13.06	109,109	16.29	7,899	1.18	7.24
19 110106	LAW IN AMER SOCIETY/AMER LAW	75	10.65	140,341	20.95	7,196	1.07	5.13
19 110300	CONTEMP WORLD AFFAIRS/HISTORY	69	9.80	110,831	16.55	6,190	0.92	5.59
19 110301	CURRENT EVENTS	111	15.76	121,601	18.15	6,710	1.00	5.52
19 110400	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	38	5.39	51,604	7.70	1,338	0.20	2.59
19 120000	PSYCHOLOGY/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE	357	50.71	391,801	58.49	31,722	4.74	8.10
19 130000	SOCIOLOGY	397	56.39	427,744	63.85	25,487	3.80	5.96
19 130500	SOCIAL PROBLEMS/CRIMINOLOGY	68	9.65	85,493	12.76	5,568	0.83	6.51
19 130501	AMERICAN PROBLEMS	33	4.68	22,874	3.41	1,301	0.19	5.69
19 130503	MINORITY PEOPLE	33	4.68	40,902	6.11	1,806	0.27	4.42
19 140101	RELIGION, COMPARATIVE/HISTORY	10	1.42	16,483	2.46	709	0.11	4.30
19 150001	SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADE 7	57	8.09	16,872	2.52	3,151	0.47	18.68
19 150002	SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADE 8	48	6.81	14,054	2.10	2,560	0.38	18.22
19 150003	SOCIAL STUDIES, GR 9-12/ABOVE	79	11.22	94,592	14.12	11,586	1.73	12.25
19 150010	RELATIONS, COMMUNITY/INTGROUP	25	3.55	43,037	6.42	951	0.14	2.21
19 150019	URBAN SURVIVAL/URBAN STUDIES	16	2.27	37,417	5.59	1,757	0.26	4.70
19 160000	OTHER SOCIAL STUDIES	139	19.74	214,042	31.95	10,721	1.60	5.01

TABLE 7

CENSUS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL COURSE OFFERINGS, 1976-77

CODE NO.	COURSE TITLE	JR. HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING COURSE		ENROLLMENT OF SCHOOLS OFFERING COURSE		COURSE ENROLLMENT		
		TOTAL NUMBER	% OF STATE TOTAL	TOTAL NUMBER	% OF STATE ENROLLMENT	TOTAL NUMBER	% OF STATE ENROLLMENT	% OF SCHS ENROLL.
19 000000	SOCIAL SCIENCES	446	97.16	200,843	96.92	216,700	104.57	107.90
19 010000	ANTHROPOLOGY/ARCHAEOLOGY	1	0.21	523	0.25	55	0.03	10.52
19 010200	WORLD CULTURES/MAN & HIS WORLD	10	2.17	6,906	3.33	719	0.35	10.41
19 020101	AREA STUDIES, AFRICA/ASIA/EURO	2	0.43	986	0.48	396	0.19	40.16
19 020106	AREA STUDIES/HIST, LAT AM/AMER	3	0.65	1,180	0.57	609	0.29	51.61
19 040100	ENVIRONMENTAL PROB/CONSERVAT	9	1.96	2,172	1.05	1,631	0.79	75.09
19 050000	CONSUMER EDUCATION	44	9.58	16,528	7.98	8,334	4.02	50.42
19 060000	ECONOMICS/ECONOMIC PROBLEMS	2	0.43	1,408	0.68	435	0.21	30.89
19 060300	CONSUMER ECONOMICS	7	1.52	2,780	1.34	1,018	0.49	36.62
19 070001	GEOGRAPHY, GRADE 7-8	73	15.90	38,733	18.69	17,088	8.25	44.12
19 070002	GEOGRAPHY, OTHER GENERAL	1	0.21	1,098	0.53	160	0.08	14.57
19 070200	HUMAN/CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY/HSGP	2	0.43	897	0.43	443	0.21	49.39
19 070203	ECONOMIC/POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY	2	0.43	856	0.41	381	0.18	44.51
19 070300	PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY	7	1.52	4,039	1.95	745	0.36	18.45
19 070411	GEOG, WORLD/REGION/U.S./URBAN/	47	10.23	23,117	11.16	9,723	4.69	42.06
19 080101	AMER HIST & WORLD BACKGROUND	20	4.35	12,189	5.88	3,862	1.86	31.68
19 080401	STATE HISTORY, GRADE 7-8	9	1.96	2,451	1.18	1,238	0.60	50.51
19 080501	U.S. HISTORY, GRADE 7-8	238	51.85	106,579	51.43	56,539	27.28	53.05
19 080502	U.S. HISTORY, GRADE 9-12	8	1.74	5,311	2.56	1,790	0.86	33.70
19 080505	BLACK HISTORY	2	0.43	844	0.41	70	0.03	8.29
19 080600	WESTERN CIVILIZATION/HISTORY	4	0.87	2,861	1.38	664	0.32	23.21
19 080700	NON-WESTERN HISTORY	1	0.21	609	0.29	199	0.10	32.68
19 080802	ANCIENT-MEDIEVAL HISTORY	3	0.65	2,476	1.19	81	0.04	3.27
19 080901	WORLD HISTORY, GRADE 7-8	43	9.36	13,988	6.75	6,298	3.04	45.02
19 080902	WORLD HISTORY, GRADE 9-12	6	1.30	4,224	2.04	254	0.12	6.01
19 110100	AMERICAN GOVERNMENT	13	2.83	7,681	3.71	2,473	1.19	32.20
19 110101	U.S. CONSTITUTION	8	1.74	4,232	2.04	1,737	0.84	41.04
19 110103	PROBLEMS OF DEMOCRACY	3	0.65	2,429	1.17	473	0.23	19.47
19 110105	COMMUNITY CIVICS/CITIZENSHIP	16	3.48	12,874	6.21	2,965	1.43	23.03
19 110106	LAW IN AMER SOCIETY/AMER LAW	5	1.08	3,454	1.67	1,053	0.51	30.49
19 110300	CONTEMP WORLD AFFAIRS/HISTORY	7	1.52	5,814	2.81	544	0.26	9.36
19 110301	CURRENT EVENTS	7	1.52	4,448	2.15	592	0.29	13.31
19 110400	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	1	0.21	688	0.33	71	0.03	10.32
19 120000	PSYCHOLOGY/BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE	5	1.08	2,619	1.26	861	0.42	32.88
19 130000	SOCIOLOGY	2	0.43	904	0.44	38	0.02	4.20
19 130500	SOCIAL PROBLEMS/CRIMINOLOGY	1	0.21	367	0.18	50	0.02	13.62
19 130501	AMERICAN PROBLEMS	1	0.21	912	0.44	168	0.08	18.42
19 130503	MINORITY PEOPLE	4	0.87	2,126	1.03	515	0.25	24.22
19 140101	RELIGION, COMPARATIVE/HISTORY	1	0.21	426	0.21	431	0.21	101.17
19 150001	SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADE 7	207	45.09	91,527	44.17	45,926	22.16	50.18
19 150002	SOCIAL STUDIES, GRADE 8	189	41.17	82,046	39.59	40,186	19.39	48.98
19 150003	SOCIAL STUDIES, GR 9-12/ABOVE	15	3.26	10,639	5.13	2,342	1.13	22.01
19 150019	URBAN SURVIVAL/URBAN STUDIES	1	0.21	724	0.35	155	0.07	21.41
19 160000	OTHER SOCIAL STUDIES	25	5.44	13,834	6.68	3,388	1.63	24.49

Typical numbers of social studies courses

Unlike the large supermarket which is likely to stock its shelves with all twelve of Campbell's chicken soup varieties and the thirty-nine others, no single high school offers as many as fifty-one distinct social studies courses. Table 8 shows the relationship between school size and course offerings for junior high schools; Table 9, for high schools. It is hardly surprising that the median number of social studies courses offered by junior high schools in all size categories is 2 courses; since 88 percent of all junior high schools are two-year, 7-8 schools, certain subjects are required; and few electives are available.

TABLE 8. NUMBER OF SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR ILLINOIS PUBLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS, 1976-77

School Enrollment	Number of Courses				
	Low	High	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
<200	0	5	2	2	2
200-499	0	8	2	2	2
500-999	0	8	2	2	3
1000 or >	2	8	2	2	4
ALL	0	8	2	2	2

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS BY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR ILLINOIS PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS, 1976-77

School Enrollment	Number of Courses				
	Low	High	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
<200	0	13	4	5	7
200-499	0	16	5	6	8
500-999	2	18	6	7	9
1000-1699	2	28	7	9	11
1700-2599	3	32	9	11	14
2600 or >	6	24	10	13	15
ALL	0	32	5	7	10

At the high school level, there is a moderate relationship between school size and number of social studies offerings, from a median of 5 courses for high schools under 200 (which are likely to be four- or six-year schools), to a median of 13 courses for high schools over 2600 enrollment. The difference between median numbers of courses and numbers at the 75th percentile is either 2 or 3 courses at each size level, indicating that variability is related to school size but is bounded. Note, however, that some of the larger high schools offer as many as 32 courses. This larger number of course titles may reflect the persistence of minicourses, rather than greater scope or depth of available course content.

Social studies course offerings and enrollments by school level

Table 10 gives the aggregate number of schools offering social studies courses, the enrollments of these schools, and the number of students enrolled in social studies courses as percentages of state total enrollment and of the enrollment of offering schools. (These data are drawn from Tables 6 and 7.) Note that virtually every school offers courses in the social studies. Where none is reported, it is plausible that social studies content is taught as interdisciplinary studies or as part of a core/block program.

TABLE 10. SOCIAL STUDIES COURSE OFFERINGS AND COURSE ENROLLMENTS BY LEVEL

	Schools Offering One or More Courses		Enrollment of Schools Offering Courses		Course Enrollment		
	N	% of State Total	N	% of State Enrollment	N	% of State Enrollment	% of School Enrollment
Jr. High School	446	97.2	200,843	96.9	216,700	104.6	107.9
High School	702	99.7	669,465	99.9	545,367	81.4	81.5

The course enrollment figures indicate that some junior high school students were taking more than one social studies course during the census year. This could be explained by students taking two one-semester (or shorter) courses during the year. There is, of course, no way that more students could have enrolled in courses than the total number of students in the schools offering those courses. Thus, no more than 200,843 junior high school students were enrolled in social studies courses. At the high school level, a maximum of 81.5 percent of the 669,465 students attending schools offering social studies courses actually enrolled in them.

Typical junior high school social studies offerings and programs

An examination of Table 6 indicates that, by far, the most frequently offered social studies course is U.S. History, Grade 7-8, offered by 52 percent of the state's junior high schools and taken by 53 percent of the students enrolled in those schools in a given year. Close behind are "Social Studies, Grade 7," offered by 45 percent of the schools and taken by 50 percent of their enrollment, and "Social Studies, Grade 8," offered by 41 percent of the schools and taken by 49 percent of their students. Trailing behind is Geography, Grade 7-8, offered by only 16 percent of the schools but taken by 44 percent of the students attending those schools.

The picture of the typical junior high school curriculum which emerges from the data consists of two required social studies courses offered either as U.S. History or as "social studies," but, in either case, including a considerable amount of American History and some study of the U.S. Constitution to conform to state mandates. The separate study of geography, once traditional, has now largely faded into other social studies offerings, where it is often ignored.

Typical high school social studies offerings and programs

The most frequently offered social studies courses are listed in Table 11, which is based on data from Table 7.

TABLE 11. MOST FREQUENTLY OFFERED HIGH SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES COURSES

1. U.S. History, grade 9-12
2. Sociology
3. World History, grade 9-12
4. Psychology/Behavioral Science
5. American Government
6. Geography/World/Region/U.S./Urban
7. American History and World Background
8. Economics/Economic Problems

There is, however, no direct relationship between the frequency with which a course is offered and the percentage of students who decide to enroll in it. Referring back to Table 7, U.S. History, Grade 9-12, is offered by 76 percent of the high schools and is taken by 23 percent of the students in those schools, where it is obviously a required course since one-quarter of the enrollment of what are typically four-year schools was enrolled in this course. On the other hand, Sociology is offered by 56 percent of the high schools, but enrolls only 6 percent of their students.

The typical Illinois high school student takes American History -- it is required for graduation. The enrollment pattern indicated by Table 7 is otherwise a scattering of courses organized around a social science discipline or around a subset of issues, such as "Urban Survival" or "Law in American Society," which relatively few students take. Since many schools require more than one year of social studies for graduation, the dispersion of enrollments across courses suggests a pedestrian approach to course selection. Of even greater concern is that less than one-third of Illinois public high schools offer economics as a separate course, and fewer than five percent of the students in those schools enroll. Some study of consumer education is mandated by statute, but apparently this is most often taught as part of other social studies courses, or as a course or unit in the subject areas of business or home economics.

Elective social studies courses in the high school

Over half of the social studies courses offered at the high school level are electives, with the percentage ranging from 54 percent of the courses offered in high schools under 200, to 91 percent of the courses offered by the largest high schools, those with enrollments over 2600. While social studies ranks fifteenth out of eighteen subject areas in the percentage of elective courses offered, this finding reflects the fact that several social studies courses are required, giving students relatively fewer opportunities to take electives. Sixty percent of the high school students taking social studies are enrolled in elective courses, not particularly impressive since only Safety and Driver Education, Physical Education, and Health are taken as electives less frequently than Social Studies. Sixty-six percent of English enrollments are in elective courses.

Sex differences in course enrollments

Girls and boys are proportionally represented in social studies courses. There are no differences between them in enrollment levels -- a relationship which holds true across school sizes and community types at both the junior high and high school levels. The lack of differences is explained in large measure by the fact that most students take social studies courses because they are required. The same equal balance between boys and girls enrolled holds for English, Health, and Physical Education, which are also required courses. In addition, social studies course content tends to be equally interesting and attractive to male and female students, since the study of history and the social sciences has not been sex-stereotyped to the extent that the study of mathematics and science has been in the no-so-distant past.

Of course, the enrollment data indicate only equality in enrollment in the courses. The content of social studies textbooks has been extensively reviewed by those concerned with sexism and by textbooks editors, but the content of textbooks and of courses is not yet free of sex-role stereotyping and bias. (The elimination of materials which convey inaccurate information about various racial and ethnic groups and of peoples in other countries is likewise only partially accomplished.) The centrality of the study of human behavior to the social studies curriculum makes such efforts all the more urgent.

Social studies within interdisciplinary programs

Some schools have programs which combine social studies with one or more other subjects, usually English. Ten junior high schools (2 percent) report having interdisciplinary programs (whether social studies is included is not specified). Four junior high schools (less than 1 percent) report offering a humanities course. At the high school level, 52 schools (7 percent) report interdisciplinary programs, and 24 (3 percent) have humanities programs. Twenty-one high schools (3 percent) offer American Studies, combining English and social studies. These interdisciplinary courses are taken by a miniscule percentage of the school population.

Social studies in special education programs

Social studies is included as a category within special education and programs for handicapped by 23 percent of the junior high schools and 39 percent of the high schools. (In addition, a few schools offer Consumer Education/Family Living.) The content of those courses cannot be determined from the Census data reported.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: The Writer's Perspective

Virtually every secondary school in Illinois offers social studies courses, some offering over thirty courses. Every Illinois secondary school student takes at least a year of social studies in junior high school and another year in high school, both including study of American History and the Constitution as required by the School Code. Many school districts set social studies graduation requirements somewhat higher than this minimum, and offer a range of courses from which students can select. As with other required subject areas in the curriculum, there are no sex differences in enrollment in social studies courses.

Course proliferation

The proliferation of courses, especially given the small number each student can possibly take, can be interpreted in several ways. The social studies designation to some extent operates as a holding company for disparate disciplines. At the high school level, many social studies teachers have completed college majors in but one of the social studies areas, most often history; yet they are often expected to include geography and economics in their history courses. The existence of more specialized teachers serves as an inducement to schools to add new course offerings, and larger schools are more likely to have enough teachers to make this possible. Furthermore, school administrators and others often take pride in the number of offerings in each subject area, presuming that quantity equals variety, and that variety is good.

The impact of enrollment declines

The current cycle of decline in the number of high school students will inevitably lead to reduction in the size of faculty and falling levels of state funding based on enrollment. Faculty cuts are likely to reduce the scope of social studies offerings or to shift responsibility for teaching specialized courses onto teachers who lack relevant preparation. School districts may respond by pruning back their social studies offerings to the "traditional" social studies curriculum of U.S. History, World History, and Government. Under the aegis of "back to the basics," these courses may be narrowly focused to transmit historical facts and to foster patriotism, to the exclusion of other important goals of social studies instruction.

The need to reduce social studies course offerings might motivate social studies educators to reconsider the essential elements of a social studies curriculum and how those elements should best be sequenced and taught. Social studies instruction might be reconceptualized to be problem-centered, with the aim of teaching students strategies for analyzing pervasive issues and making informed decisions about them. Unfortunately, adversity often dampens creativity and reflection, so that declining enrollments and a diminished faculty are likely to lead to social studies programs which become more narrow in content and methodology. The elimination of social

studies consultants, supervisors, and (in some districts) social studies department chairpersons makes the process of retrenchment even more difficult. Many of the issues raised by reductions in students, faculty, and course offerings are related to the nature of the social studies, the purposes of social studies instruction, and the selection and organization of content and teaching strategies to further those goals. Decisions on these issues should involve experts in the social studies field.

Implications for staff development

Declining school enrollments and accompanying financial pressures have forced school districts to reduce their teaching staffs and cut hiring of new teachers. The effects on teachers have been more than financial. The teachers who stay tend to have less opportunity for stimulation from new colleagues with new ideas. Fewer people are pursuing careers in education, and thus there are fewer students and intern teachers for experienced teachers to work with. Many teachers consider this collaboration a source of stimulation. Declining public interest in the schools has affected teachers' morale. An insecure future further depresses it. It appears that fewer teachers are seeking advanced training or taking summer school or evening courses. Membership in professional teacher associations is declining, as teachers see (and receive) fewer rewards for their efforts to contribute to state and national professional organizations. Tenured teachers, particularly those who have reached salary ceilings, are seeking positions outside the schools.

Those teachers who decide to remain are likely to want and need opportunities for professional development which are not now being provided, or at least are not being encouraged. Stable, aging faculties will be developing and teaching courses for the next several decades. If traditional sources of innovation (e.g., faculty turnover, social studies supervisors, etc.) are eliminated, school administrators need to consider cost-effective ways to compensate for them.

The impact of minimum competency testing and "back to basics"*

Competency testing in the social studies is already widespread in the United States, and is in the planning stage in Illinois. Results of a survey conducted to determine the extent of social studies competency testing indicate that fifteen states have statewide testing programs that are specifically related to one or more social studies subjects, and in twenty-three states the competency testing program directly or collaterally impinges on the content of the social studies curriculum (Williams, Moore, and Winters, 1978). The number of school districts which assess student progress in social studies skills is even larger than this figure might indicate, since several school districts have opted to test in the social studies in states where identification of graduation competencies has been

*This section is based on Fox, Williams, and Winters, 1979.

left to local school boards. Testing at the local level has further affected social studies where local boards have elected to assess students in life skills, survival skills, or job skills. Frequently, such skills have been construed to mean reading and understanding ballots, government documents, newspapers, and/or maps. One state, Oregon, considers citizenship education a basic skill along with reading, writing, and computation.

Illinois has had a limited form of graduation competency testing in the social studies for decades. The School Code requires that students pass what is popularly called the "Constitution Test" in order to graduate from eighth grade and from high school. The test requirement has underscored the dominant position of American History in the curriculum: What gets tested, gets taught. Moreover, American History's place has been bolstered by public sentiment and by centuries of arguments for its value (Fox and Thompson, forthcoming).

The broadening of competency testing in Illinois will raise the question of the purpose of social studies instruction. The present consumer education requirement is intended to assure that high school graduates have some competence in several important life skills. If graduation minimum competencies in social studies are primarily life skills or "survival skills," high school teachers are likely to emphasize them at the expense of other educational goals, deflecting the curriculum toward the test. A further risk is that minimums will become maximums, as class time is spent assuring that all students have mastered the skills to be tested, to the neglect of those students who can achieve a larger number of skills or a greater degree of mastery.

Declining enrollments, taking place in a climate of concern about minimum competency testing, could (1) lead school districts to reduce their social studies offerings to make more time for instruction in reading and computational skills, (2) encourage the development of "life skills" courses, and/or (3) foster efforts to integrate the development of reading and other cognitive skills into existing social studies courses. In any case, the value of social studies instruction needs to be asserted, to assure that efforts to raise skill levels in a few areas (such as reading and arithmetic) do not lead to losses in others. As R. Freeman Butts reminds us,

> The professional as well as the public seems to have forgotten that the original purpose of universal literacy was to enable all the citizens to exercise their civic duties properly, rather than to enable them to get jobs (1979, p. 362).

The next Census

A few years from now the Illinois State Board of Education plans to conduct a second Census. The findings of that Census will reveal the actual impact of the trends discussed in this report, including changes in course offerings and enrollments over the first several years of overall enrollment declines in Illinos secondary schools. Now that we have course and enrollment data and the prospect of more, further issues arise:

1) To what extent do course titles accurately reflect course content? Do changes in titles reflect changes in content? Is current course content appropriate to its purpose?
2) What criteria for course selection are employed? To what extent do schools suggest, or require, what they view to be an optimal "mix" of educational experiences?
3) What criteria will schools use in determining which courses will be dropped and which will be modified?

These are fundamentally questions about the quality of the educational experiences of students and cannot be answered directly from data on the quantity of schooling. The next Census should seek information on these three issues to aid in interpreting the changes which are already taking place.

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